

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Claims 1-17. Cancelled.

18. (New) A method for tempering at least one packaged product unit in a treatment tank, the method comprising:

placing the at least one packaged product unit in the treatment tank;

introducing an ice slurry comprising water and ice particles into the treatment tank;

circulating the ice slurry in the treatment tank around the at least one packaged product unit in order to cool the at least one packaged product unit, wherein the ice slurry present in an overflow trough located at an upper part of the treatment tank is pumped through a pipe connected to the overflow trough and injected back into the treatment tank through at least one injection nozzle.

19. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the ice slurry is 25 % ice particles and has a temperature of -2.5 degrees Celsius.

20. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein there are at least three injection nozzles.

21. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the water is a saline brine of in the form of a mixture of salt dissolved in fresh water comprising approximately 2% salt.

22. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the ice slurry comprises approximately 25% ice particles by weight, 2 % sodium chloride by weight and the remainder fresh water, whereby the sodium chloride allows for the temperature of the ice slurry to be approximately -2.5 degrees Celsius without the water freezing.

23. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein when the temperature of the ice slurry reaches approximately 0.5 degrees Celsius, additional ice slurry is introduced into the treatment tank from a supply tank in which the ice slurry is prepared with an adequate ratio of ice particles from an ice machine.

24. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the ice slurry is prepared in the supply tank to comprise from about 15% to about 25% ice particles and has a temperature from about -1 degrees Celsius to about -2 degrees Celsius.

25. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the ice slurry in the supply tank is kept in a condition which allows for pumping by stirring it with a paddle mechanism.

26. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the ice slurry is circulated between a number of treatment tanks for product units in series or in parallel and an ice slurry supply tank for tempering of the product units.

27. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein the treatment tanks are utilized in order, one after the other.

28. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the at least one packaged product unit comprises a vacuum packed product.

29. (New) The method according to claim 28, wherein the vacuum packed product comprises a food stuff.

30. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the at least one packaged product unit is a plurality of vacuum packed products and the method further comprises the following sequential steps:

heating the plurality of vacuum packed products hanging side by side on a rack;
transporting the rack with the plurality of vacuum packed products to the
treatment tank;
submerging the rack and the plurality of vacuum packed products in the treatment
tank; and

cooling the plurality of vacuum packed products for a predetermined period of time.

31. (New) A system for tempering at least one packaged product unit utilizing a ice slurry comprising water and ice particles, the system comprising:

at least one treatment tank for submerging the at least one packaged product unit, wherein the at least one treatment tank comprises an upper part with an overflow trough;

at least one injection nozzle;

a pipe connecting the overflow trough and the at least one injection nozzle; and

a pump associated with the pipe for pumping ice slurry present in the overflow trough through the pipe and injecting the ice slurry back into the at least one treatment tank through the least one injection nozzle so as to circulate the ice slurry in the at least one treatment tank around the at least one packaged product unit in order to cool the at least one packaged product unit.

32. (New) The system according to claim 31, further comprising:

a supply tank, in which the ice slurry is prepared, connected to the at least one treatment tank wherein the at least one treatment tank; and

means for circulating the ice slurry between the at least one treatment tank and the supply tank.

33. (New) The system according to claim 31, further comprising:

a transport organ for continual transport of the at least one packaged product unit to the at least one treatment tank for cooling with suspension for a required period of time.

34. (New) The system according to claim 31, further comprising:

a rack on which the at least one packaged product unit hangs while submerged in the at least one treatment tank.